

Torrance, California  
May 28, 1940

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF TORRANCE

The City Council of the City of Torrance convened in a Regular Meeting in the Council Chamber, City Hall, Torrance, California, on Tuesday evening, May 28, 1940 at 7:45 P.M.

Mayor McGuire called the meeting to order.

Clerk Bartlett called the roll, those answering present being Councilmen: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. Absent: Councilmen: None.

Mayor McGuire asked if each Councilman had read the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City Council held May 14, 1940, each member replying in the affirmative.

Councilman Murray moved that the minutes of an Adjourned Regular Meeting held May 21, 1940 and of an Adjourned Regular Meeting held May 23, 1940 be approved as written. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

A communication dated June 28, 1940 was read from the WALTERIA Civic Organization, recommending a number of civic improvements in WALTERIA and requesting a meeting with the City Council for discussion of same.

Councilman Murray suggested that a meeting be held in the near future, the WALTERIA Civic Organization to be contacted relative to same.

A second communication dated June 28, 1940 was read, requesting street improvements in WALTERIA and suggesting that the Streets and Lighting Committees meet with them for discussion of same.

A communication was read from the Secretary of the Torrance Planning Commission, recommending that Lot 17, Block 16, Torrance Tract, remain in zone C-1, Retail Commercial District, a communication having been previously received from C. T. Rippey requesting that this property be placed in C-2 zone to allow erection of a service station by a Mr. J. W. Macdowell. Mr. Curtiss said a petition had been received from persons in the vicinity protesting any zoning change of this lot.

Mayor McGuire said Mr. Rippey had contacted the persons who

signed the petition who had all agreed to the zoning change if the station is installed without steam cleaning rack.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that Lot 17, Block 16, Torrance Tract be re-zoned from C-1 zone to C-2 zone. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the request of J. W. Macdowell for permit to erect a service station on Lot 17, Block 16, Torrance Tract, be granted. Councilman Babcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

A communication was read from the Torrance Factory Frolic, advising the Frolic Committee had decided to hold a public dance September 26, 27 and 28 (evenings), date of the Factory Frolic, instead of presenting industrial and commercial exhibits as originally planned, and requesting an approval of the Council.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the request for the change be granted. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Clerk Bartlett reported receipt from the Bank of America of \$472.15 (plus \$10.00 deposit) in payment of Lots 15 and 16, Block 52, Torrance Tract, sold to Edward G. Neess.

A communication was read from The National Board of Fire Underwriters, urging the attendance of the Fire Chief and other members of the Fire Department at the University of Southern California Twelfth Annual Institute of Government, a course in Fire Prevention Engineering being offered.

Councilman Powell moved that an appropriation of \$25.00 be made for purchase of a Professional Transferable Membership, said membership book being for the use of anyone desiring to attend the courses. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

A communication was read from the Petroleum Crime Prevention Association, Inc., commending the Torrance Police Department under the leadership of Chief Stroh for their cooperation with the said organization.

A communication was read from Clarence M. Pinkham, President of the Torrance Young Democrats, requesting use of a room in one of the city buildings for the semi-monthly meeting of the organization.

Upon inquiry of Mayor McGuire, Attorney McCall stated he did not think the city could legally grant use of a room in one of the City buildings for use of a private organization. The Clerk was instructed to direct a letter to the organization to this effect.

A communication was read from the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company Coast Lines, together with a Mutual Termination Agreement in name of Torrance Municipal Water District No. 1 concerning cancellation of contract covering 10-inch water line crossing under Railway Company's track in Torrance.

The agreement was referred to attorney McCall for checking.

A communication was read from the County of Los Angeles Department of the County Public Library, advising that, due to reclassification by the Civil Service Commission of positions in the county government, including Library positions, and the establishment of a revised pay plan, the contract with the City of Torrance for library service for the year 1940-41 had not been submitted to

date. However, Miss Vogleson, County Librarian, said the contract could probably be ready for approval by July 1, 1940.

A communication was read from the County of Los Angeles Department of Health, advising that an investigation of the complaint of Waltheria residents regarding dust created by the Dicalite Company had been made.

A communication was read from the Federal Works Agency Works Projects Administration of Southern California, extending an invitation to a Plaque Ceremony and luncheon at the United States Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Armory in Chavez Ravine, Los Angeles, June 11, 1940. Advance reservations were requested.

A communication was read from Henry B. Sharpe, 1639-1/2 Cabrillo Avenue, requesting permit to operate a soft drink, hamburger and hot dog stand at Torrance Beach.

Engineer Young advised that practically all this area is privately owned and that most of it is zoned against business.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the matter be referred to the Police Department for investigation and report. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

A communication was read from the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors, enclosing copy of resolution adopted by the Board on May 21, 1940 declaring Elena Avenue and certain other streets within the City of Torrance to be no longer a part of the County system of highways.

A communication was read from George Vandegrift, owner of the Torrance Taxi Company, requesting permission to use space on South side of Five Point Cafe for taxi stand.

Councilman Murray moved the request of Mr. Vandegrift be referred to the Police Department for investigation, recommendation and report. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Two recommendations that fireworks permits be granted were submitted by Chief J. E. McMaster as follows: (1) W.A. Birchler at 23925 Narbonne Avenue and (2) Harbor City Post American Legion #382 at 24001 Narbonne Avenue.

Councilman Babcock moved that the recommendation of Chief McMaster be complied with. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Clerk Bartlett read in full an agreement dated May 28, 1940 between the Pacific Electric Railway Company and the City of Torrance pertaining to Pacific Electric Railway Company's right of way between the easterly and westerly roadways of Cabrillo Avenue, and extending from Torrance Boulevard to Plaza Del Amo, in the City of Torrance.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the Mayor be authorized to execute the agreement between the Pacific Electric Railway Company and the City of Torrance. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Mayor McGuire gave a brief summary of the plan as outlined in the agreement, stating that the Cabrillo Avenue right of way has been desired by the City for a number of years, an agreement having been finally made to the satisfaction of both parties concerned.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that immediately upon execution of the agreement by both parties concerned, the City Attorney be authorized to commence condemnation suit against the Pacific Elec-

tric Railway Company for acquisition by the City of the right of way. Councilman Babcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Clerk Bartlett presented for final reading:

ORDINANCE NO. 316

AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A LAND USE PLAN WITHIN THE CITY OF TORRANCE CREATING EIGHT (8) DISTRICTS; REGULATING THE USE OF PROPERTY, HEIGHT OF STRUCTURES, AND OPEN SPACES FOR LIGHT AND VENTILATION; ADOPTING A MAP OF SAID DISTRICTS; DEFINING TERMS USED; PROVIDING FOR THE ADJUSTMENT, ENFORCEMENT AND AMENDMENT THEREOF; AND PRESCRIBING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION, AND REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT THEREWITH.

Councilman Babcock moved that further reading of Ordinance No. 316 be dispensed with. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Councilman Babcock moved that Ordinance No. 316 be adopted for final reading. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Clerk Bartlett presented for final reading:

ORDINANCE NO. 317

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING PARAGRAPH 72 OF SECTION 12 OF ORDINANCE NO. 235 OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE, ENTITLED "AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR LICENSING AND REGULATING THE CARRYING ON OF CERTAIN PROFESSIONS, TRADES, CALLINGS AND OCCUPATIONS CARRIED ON WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE; REPEALING ORDINANCES NO. 110, NO. 126, NO. 137, NO. 151, NO. 183, NO. 196, NO. 211, AND ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT THEREWITH, AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR THE VIOLATION THEREOF."

Councilman Babcock moved that further reading of Ordinance No. 317 be dispensed with. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Councilman Babcock moved that Ordinance No. 317 be adopted for final reading. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Clerk Bartlett presented for first reading:

ORDINANCE NO. 318

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TORRANCE DECLARING THE CLOSING UP, VACATING AND ABANDONING IN WHOLE OF A PORTION OF NEWTON STREET.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that further reading of Ordinance No. 318 be dispensed with. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that Ordinance No. 318 be adopted for first reading. Councilman Babcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Powell moved that an appropriation of not to exceed \$114.66 be made to replace broken lamp pole at 222nd Street and Arlington Avenue. Councilman Hitchcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Powell moved that Fire Chief J. E. McMaster be authorized to attend the Fire Chiefs' Convention in Santa Barbara June 8, 1940, expenses paid. Councilman Babcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Powell read excerpts from the General Laws of the State of California pertaining to handling of public funds by the Police Department and other employees of Cities.

Councilman Powell read the following statement:

"It is my intention to bring to the attention of the people of Torrance the irregularities existing in the Police Department and the City Judge's office in spite of opposition from some members of the City Council, intimidation by slander suits, and unfair newspaper attacks.

Over a year ago, the Finance Committee, composed at that time of Mr. Tolson, Mr. McGuire and Mr. Hitchcock, were advised by C. J. Rambo, the City Auditor, of an existing shortage in the accounts of the City Judge. The Committee failed to call this matter to the attention of other members of the City Council or the public. Instead, the City Judge was permitted to make secret restitution and to continue holding his position of trust. Recently I found this out and upon my demand Mr. Rambo repeated the information regarding the shortage for the benefit of the entire City Council at that time. He stated that over four hundred dollars of the shortage had been found in an envelope in the Police Department. Since that time, he has made other statements regarding that part of the money found in the Police Department.

I believe that the matter should be investigated to arrive at all the facts. I have two letters from Mr. Rambo in which he has affirmed the fact that there was a shortage in the City Judge's accounts. It should be noted that the discovery was made on April 26, 1939 covering shortage of preceding months and restitution was not made until sometime after the shortage was exposed. The letters are as follows: (Councilman Powell read two communications addressed to him by C. J. Rambo & Company)".

Councilman Powell moved that, in view of the above stated facts, Judge Lessing be dismissed as City Judge of the City of Torrance. Councilman Murray seconded the motion.

Councilman Hitchcock asked Councilman Murray if he did not feel, due to the fact that the matter has been referred to the Grand Jury, that that body should be allowed to make their investigation before the City Council takes further action.



Councilman Powell replied that, in his opinion, the matter should have been reported to the entire Council by the Finance Committee at the time the Auditor informed them of the shortage.

Councilman Hitchcock repeated his question, to which Councilman Powell replied that since the office of City Judge is an appointive rather than elective office, he felt the responsibility should rest with the City Council in matters of dismissals.

Councilman Hitchcock still contended that the Grand Jury should be allowed to make an investigation and submit the findings in the case.

Councilman Powell said "it isn't a matter of what they find in this case. If they were elective offices, yes, they would go out immediately. "

A roll call vote was taken at this time on Councilman Powell's motion to dismiss Judge Lessing, the vote being as follows: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Murray and Powell. NOES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock and McGuire. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Murray:

"We have documents here to call to your attention from the City Auditor stating a fact. So that we will know how to proceed in the future, how much should we allow, in your opinion, someone, to take - how long should they be allowed to keep it before they pay it back. It appears this was taken and the audit was not completed until it was convenient for the money to be paid back. So that there won't be any confusion -- we are trying to call attention of the people to something that has occurred that is decidedly irregular and we would like to know --- the finger of scorn has been pointed at us calling it politics - we don't mind that. However, to clear up the situation, we should arrive at some figure that someone will be allowed to take."

Mayor McGuire called attention to a few of the projects either in progress at the present time or scheduled to begin soon in the City of Torrance, naming the Vista Highlands Sewer Project, commenced May 28, 1940; advising that word had been received from the Metropolitan Water District informing that they are in favor of extending the Torrance water line from 190th Street to Crenshaw Boulevard to 203rd Street at a great saving to the City of Torrance; an agreement entered into between the Pacific Electric Railway Company and the City of Torrance with regard to the right of way of Cabrillo Avenue; adoption of a Land Use Plan, or Zoning Plan, for the entire City.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that an appropriation of not to exceed \$250.00 be made for material for sidewalk on the west side of Arlington Avenue from Lincoln to Santa Fe Avenue. Councilman Babcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that an appropriation of not to exceed \$60.00 be made for material for curb and sidewalk repair, Carson and Martina Streets. Councilman Babcock seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that an appropriation of not to exceed \$239.34 be made for repairs to 171st Street and Prairie Avenue, North Torrance. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

Councilman Hitchcock moved that the City Council, Torrance Improvement Association and Planning Commission meet at some date in the near future to discuss plans for improvement of Cabrillo Avenue and Torrance Boulevard. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

#### ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Klusman asked each Councilman who voted no on the motion to dismiss Judge Lessing to make a statement as to why he did so, irrespective, he said, of the fact that the Grand Jury investigation had been requested.

Councilman Hitchcock said his answer to this question was given at the time of the original motion, (May 14, 1940).

Councilman Babcock said he had voted no, feeling that, since the matter has been referred to the Grand Jury, it is up to them to handle the situation.

Mayor McGuire stated he voted no for the same reason given by Councilman Babcock.

Councilman Powell asked for an explanation as to why they had acted as they did in not reporting to the full Council regarding the matter at the time they were given the information by the Auditor.

Mayor McGuire said he, at the time acting as Councilman, with no more authority than any other Councilman, was informed of the alleged shortage by the Auditor in the funds of the Departments, and that Mr. Rambo had said it was very difficult to state where the shortage was, since four policemen were allowed at the time to handle bails and fines. He said he had asked Mr. Rambo to make a change in the system of handling monies collected for fines and bails, which had been done, all funds received being turned over to the City Clerk's Department, the whole department being protected by bonds. He said at the time of the discussion with Mr. Rambo, Mr. Rambo had said that about 90% of California cities used the system for collection of these funds as was being used by the City of Torrance at that time.

Councilman Powell read an excerpt from the Torrance Herald of May 16, 1940, a statement of Chief Stroh's regarding his books, in which Chief Stroh stated he had a receipt for \$550.00 which he turned in at the time. He said a discrepancy existed, the auditor having stipulated that the amount located in the Police Department was \$400.00.

Mr. Leatherman asked why the boulevard stop signs on Prairie Avenue were placed on the north and south corners instead of the east and west corners. Mrs. Gonner added a few words on this subject.

Engineer Young advised that the street intersecting Prairie Avenue at the point in question is a secondary state highway, cities not being allowed to place stop signs on state highways.

Mayor McGuire asked Mrs. Gonner if she had seen the map for increasing the school in North Torrance, the answer being no. He informed her the Planning Commission has the map for inspection, if anyone is interested.

Two gentlemen in the audience asked a few questions about the zoning ordinance. They were informed the maps are on file in the Engineer's office and can be inspected by anyone who cares to do so.

Councilman Hitchcock moved all bills properly audited be paid. Councilman Murray seconded the motion, which was carried by the following roll call vote: AYES: COUNCILMEN: Babcock, Hitchcock, Murray, Powell and McGuire. NOES: COUNCILMEN: None. ABSENT: COUNCILMEN: None.

At 8:59 P.M., upon motion of Councilman Hitchcock, seconded by Councilman Murray, the meeting adjourned.

A. H. Baird  
City Clerk of the City of Torrance

Approved:

Tom J. McGuire  
Mayor of the City of Torrance